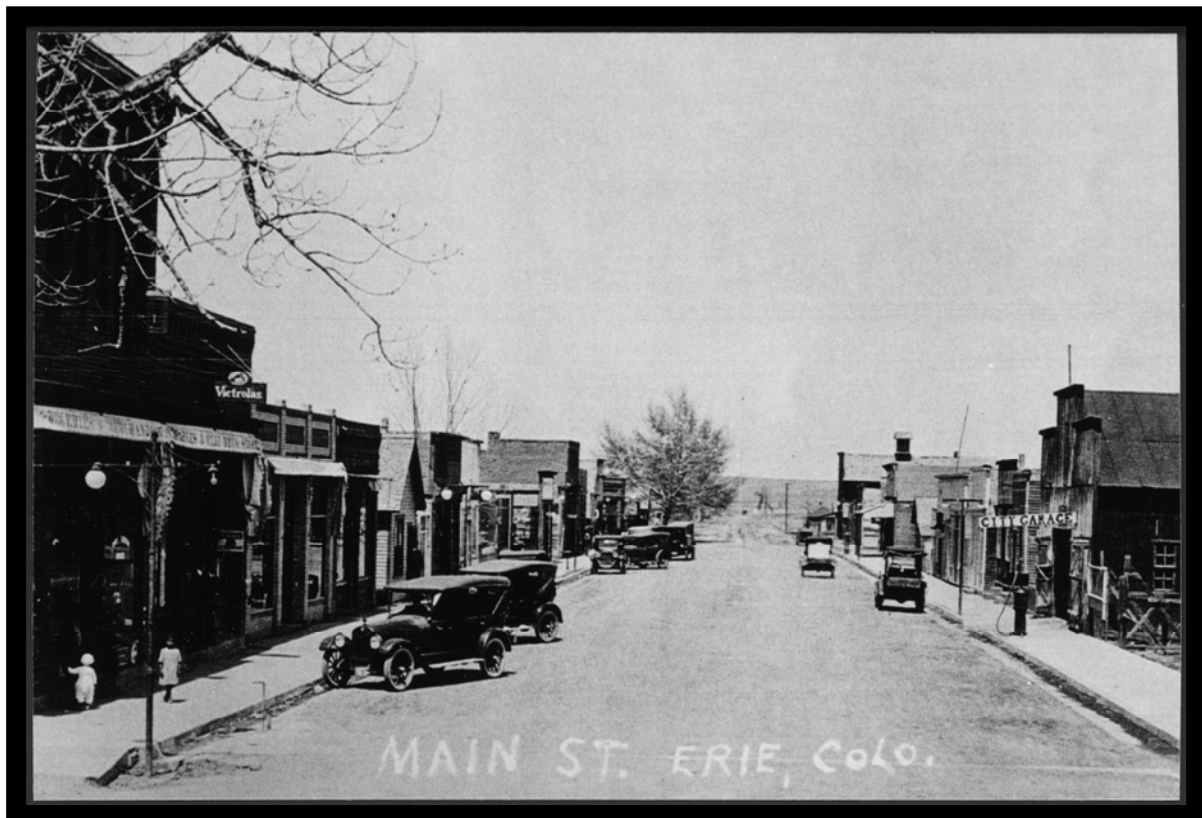


Town of Erie Historic Preservation Board

Presents

A Selected Timeline Of Erie's History



MAIN ST. ERIE, COLO.

2009 Edition

Erie Historic Society Collection

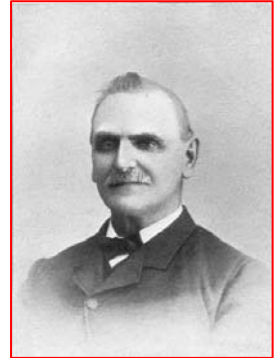
Erie Colorado Selected Timeline

1823

Rev. J. Van Valkenburg (founder of Erie) born in Schoharie County, New York.

REV. RICHARD J. VAN VALKENBURG. *This worthy citizen of Erie, Weld County, is known far and wide, and is deservedly esteemed in religious, fraternal and civic circles. In many of these varied fields of activity he has been a pioneer to this region of Colorado, for, among others, he established. The Town of Erie, CO was officially established on November 16, 1874. It is said that Rev. Richard Jephtha Van Valkenburg made his way here to Colorado from Erie, Pennsylvania. Not only was he the founder of the Erie Methodist Church, they say he was the force that helped organize the establishment of the Town, which was named for his place of birth, Erie, PA. He also served Erie, CO in the capacities of mayor, postmaster, police judge, president of the school-board, and justice of the peace.*

Mardos Collection



1861-1865

Civil War

1860's



In Colorado, churches were outnumbered by saloons and parlor houses. In towns that didn't have church buildings; services were held in school rooms, private homes, and if no other space was available, in saloons that would shut down for the services. Ministers traveled from one town to another (Circuit Riders) in all kinds of weather, sometimes preaching sermons in three or four mining camps or valley towns in one day.

Mike Brennan's saloon on Briggs St. 1916 - DeWitt Brenna Collection.

1866

R. J. Van Valkenburg comes to Colorado to regain his health; works in mines in the Central City vicinity.

1866

Captain Ira Austin discovers a coal vein on the hill due east of Erie and opens the first coal mine.

1867

- R. J. Van Valkenburg and family settle in Erie and name the town in honor of his former home Erie, Pennsylvania.
- Union Pacific decides to cross the Rocky Mountains through Wyoming, bypassing the rough mountain terrain of Berthoud Pass in Colorado to lay the 'most track in the least amount of time'. Nov 19 - Denver Pacific Railway incorporated under the laws of Colorado by the 'Board of Trade' was established for this undertaking. Former Governor Dr. John Evans and David H. Moffat propose to build the 106-mile link between Denver and Cheyenne. Denverites subscribe to \$300,000 in bonds, Arapahoe County votes for \$500,000 bond issue.

1870

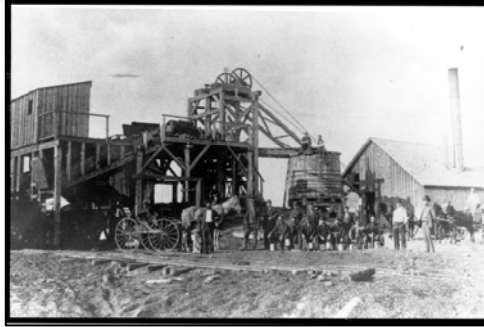
Denver-Pacific Spur Railroad (later the Union Pacific) stopped in Erie for passenger service.

Dudley Pitchford collection



Erie Colorado — Selected Timeline

1871



First coal mining patent, bearing resident U.S. Grant's signature is granted to John B. McCool. Briggs Mine is also established, the first commercial coal mine in the Erie area. Coal miners strike in Erie; 12 miners jailed

The Garfield Mine #2 south of Erie closed in 1905.
Lois Regnier Waneka collection

1871

The first commercial railroad comes to Erie

Mining was far and away the most significant industry in nineteenth-and early twentieth-century Colorado and has remained important since that time. What spurred the advance of coal mining was the revitalization of metal mining in the late 1860s, coupled with the first railroad construction in Colorado. The impact of the railroads came first in the Northern Coalfield. In 1871, the Boulder Valley Railroad, building off the Denver Pacific line, laid track to the new town of Erie, some 20 miles north of Denver. It stimulated renewed development of the Northern Coalfield. Production of the Boulder Valley Mine surged as it became Colorado's largest producer for a time, and overall the statewide coal industry grew strongly, based primarily on the renewed output from the field. Erie became the most important coal town in Colorado.

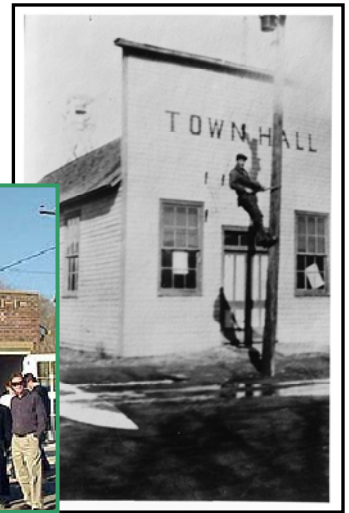
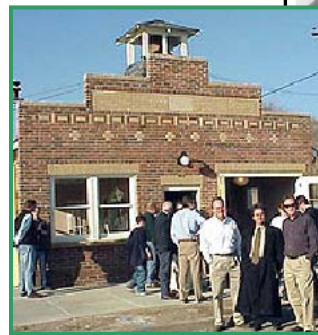
coloradohistory-oahp.org

1874

The Town of Erie was laid out and incorporated, November 16, 1874; officers appointed in accordance to Territory of Colorado provisions for town government. The first Mayor (then called the president of the Trustees) was George Meloor; streets were named after prominent citizens among these; Kattel, Briggs, Holbrook, Pierce, Moffat and Cheesman.

At the time of incorporation in 1874, five temporary trustees governed the town until a mayor and city council were elected. Within a short time, town business was being conducted in a new town hall, which doubled as a public meeting place and a classroom until the schoolhouse could be built.

The "Old City Hall" building was renovated in 2005 and maintains continued viability of use to the town for occupation by the Erie Chamber of Commerce.



1874



Erie's first school is established; 33 students enrolled. School was first held in the first Town Hall building 237 Wells St., (above) and in the "Coffin" house at 525 Pierce St.

DeWitt Brennan collection

Erie Colorado — Selected Timeline

1875	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Coal companies import "summer miners" while regular workers were off for the summer working in hard metal mines in the mountains; – Erie has one doctor in town.
1876	First jail built in Erie
1877	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Erie's population is about 600; – Coal miners strike in Erie; explosives are set off in front of the Boulder Valley Mine; troops are brought into the area to maintain law and order; they build a six sided "fort" on the hillside. The community enters in what is locally known as the "Erie War"
1878	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Knights of Labor Local #771, first mining labor union in Colorado , chartered in Erie; – A narrow gauge railroad was under construction to the coal fields of Canfield and Erie (this line ran until 1889)
1879	Union Pacific railroad stops in Erie but not in Longmont; problems between the Union Pacific and the mines erupted and resulted in Union Pacific Officials pulling out of Erie and moving operations to Hanna, Wyoming.
1881	Erie's first school building (second official school) is built at Briggs and Wells Streets – over 100 students are enrolled

LINCOLN SCHOOL (Erie Town Hall) National Register 7/22/1981, 5WL.216.

--
This two-story brick building was constructed in 1906 and continued to operate as a school until 1966. It was renovated in 1998 and now serves as Erie Government Town Hall.



DeWitt Brennan collection


NOTE: The first Lincoln School building, on the site of the present Town Community Building at Wells and Holbrook Streets, was a four-room frame building built in 1881. This consisted of four rooms, a large one in the center with other rooms on the south, west and east. When the number of students outgrew this building, some of the children again attended school in the "coffin" house.

This frame building was moved from the Holbrook Street site so that a new larger school could be built. This new Lincoln School building, made of bricks was completed and attendance started there in January 1907.

This building soon became inadequate, so in 1920 four additional rooms were built on the north end of the building. Up to the time the new 7-12 grade high school was built in 1929, this building was used by all twelve grades. In 1966, after 54 years of service, this Lincoln School building was abandoned for the new Erie Elementary School on County Line Road. Later the Lincoln School building was giving to the Town by RE-IJ School District to be used by the Community. The Town Hall was moved into the building for the purpose it is now serving.

Excerpt from "Erie: Yesterday and Today"

Erie Colorado — Selected Timeline

1883	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Erie's first church - Welsh Presbyterian Church is built - their services were conducted in Welsh; – Erie's first cemetery was near the old Presbyterian church; this cemetery was eventually relocated and there is confusion regarding its actual location and debate over whether all of the graves had been moved; Some thought it was on the site the current Methodist Parsonage occupies, however the site was in the adjacent block to the south. Some thought it was relocated because of a local flood while others discount the flooding.
1884	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Erie's first News paper, the Erie-Canfield Independent was founded - Published until 1896
1885	<p>Knights of Labor Agency call the first strike in the Northern fields, miners vote to strike;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Erie has four doctors in town.
1888	<p>United Methodist Church is built and dedicated; cost \$1,475.00</p> <p>The vacated Presbyterian Church was moved from across the street to become the Methodist Church's activity center. It later became the town community center. <i>Lois Regnier Waneka collection</i></p> 
1890	A local flood devastates much of the Town of Erie.
1893	Depression under President Cleveland strikes the Erie area hard!
1898	St. Scholasticas Catholic Church dedicated on August 18.
1900	Three Webber brothers killed in mining accident that claimed over 300 miners - a memorial to the Webbers was established in the Methodist Church. (still exists today)
1901	Erie has three doctors in town.
1910	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Northern Coal Fields labor strikes close all mines of the Northern Colorado coal fields; Strike lasts for four years; deputies guard coal properties; wages voluntarily increased after several strikes; – Flu epidemic strikes.
1911	Miner's wages were \$3.00 per day
1912	Coal miners achieve an eight hour work day; A gun battle at Lafayette, Colorado involves the miners.

Erie Colorado — Selected Timeline

1914	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ludlow, Colorado sees a gun battle waged and one soldier and four miners are killed; 14 bodies later found at Ludlow; Federal troops are ordered into battle; Strikers finally swear peace; mine at Lafayette is burned; – President Wilson appoints a board to settle trouble in Colorado Strike Zone; The general strike is eventually declared ended.
1917	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – United States enters World War I. – Influenza Epidemic strikes the area.
1921	Erie has biggest flood in it's history.
1922	Miners strike; national guardsmen called to active duty to subdue the strikers.
1926	Ku Klux Klan marched into the Erie Methodist church during a service led by Rev. W. J. Keeser. Keeser asked them to leave because they refused to remove their hoods. He asked them to leave a contribution on their way out of the building. A cross was burned on the hill east of town but nothing further developed.
1927	Columbine miner's strike - thirteen miners wounded and several killed.

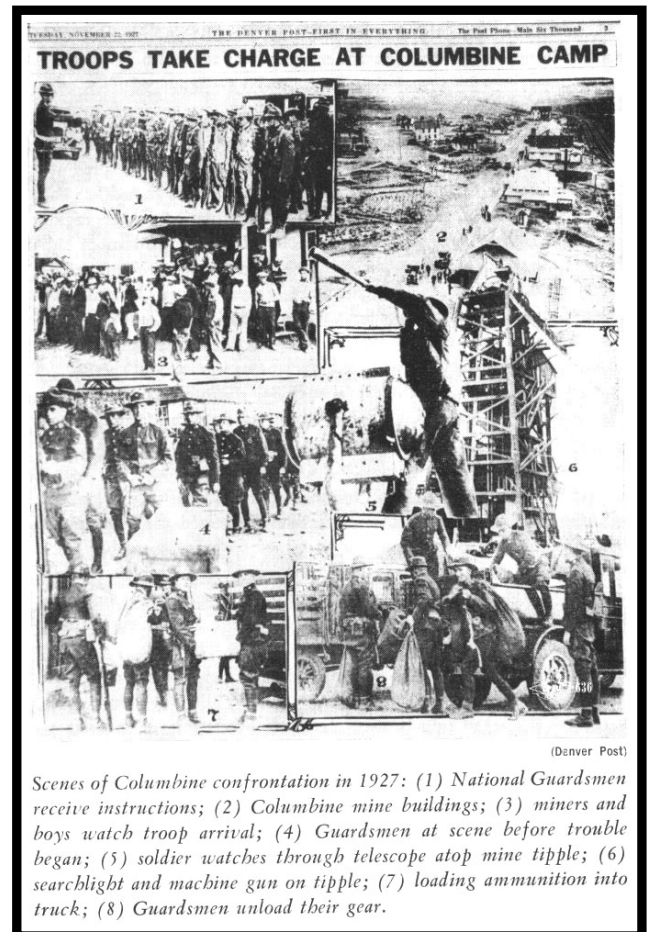
NOTE: The coal industry was "sick," and in an effort to meet financial obligations, coal owners cut wages. By 1927 miners were ready to strike again. The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) organized a strike and soon had all mines in the state closed except the big Columbine Mine near Erie that was owned by the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company. By mid-November 1927, it was cold and no coal was being mined for use by Valmont Power Plant, the University of Colorado, hospitals, railroads, businesses, and homes. The need for coal was critical.

Miners were demonstrating at the Columbine Mine (with permission of the owners) and miners from Marshall joined the strike lines that marched through mine property every day. Early on the morning of November 21, 1927, state police opened fire on the striking miners, killing six men and injuring scores of individuals, including several women who were badly hurt.

Martial law was declared in Colorado's northern coalfields. Miners gradually went back to work after losing this strike also.

In 1933 the National Industrial Recovery Act was passed, which automatically recognized unions in all United States coal mines. From that time on miners were allowed to join the United Mine Workers of America.

Boulder County Open Space/Walking Through History on Marshall Mesa



The heading of the page above at right has a date of November 22, 1927, and comes from the Denver Post, which was then a conservative newspaper and tended to side with the mine operators.

Erie Colorado — Selected Timeline

1927 – The Washington mine opens.

1928 Erie's population is about 1000.

1928-29

Erie High School was built in 1928-29; Through the years it was renovated and untimely became what it is today.

Erie High School;
Now current day
Middle School.



Lois Regnier Waneka collection.

1929 Wall street "lays an egg" leading to the Great Depression; local mines experience slow down; residents live on extended credit from store owners.
– High School girls' basketball team captures State Championship with a win over Las Animas

1930 Diphtheria epidemic hits the area.

1933

Local Coal mines reopened; miners strike for better wages and working conditions and mining accidents and deaths of miners were frequently experienced



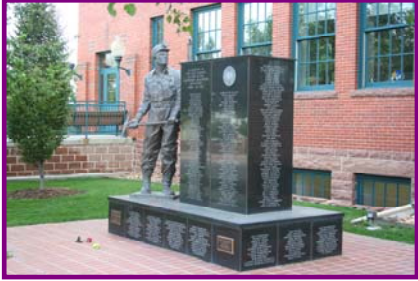



Columbine Mine miners
MINERS FROM COLUMBINE MINE, ALL OLDER THAN 60 YEARS, WERE PHOTOGRAPHED ABOUT 1937. LEFT TO RIGHT: JOE COSS OF ERIE, JOE BERANEK OF LAFAYETTE, RALPH DAVIES, JOHN QUELLA, JOE KUTCHO, GEORGE BROWN, ARLO WILSON. FRONT ROW: WALT THIEMER, JOE PANEK, JACK SCOTTIE MAXWELL.
Photo from collection of Lafayette Miners Museum, given to Museum by Louis Gaboury

1935 High School boys' basketball team plays in the State Tournament for the first time. They lost.

1941 Japanese attacks Pearl Harbor on December 7th.

Erie Colorado — Selected Timeline

1946	Columbine mine closes - demand for coal dropping nation wide.
1960	Coal mines are no longer producing and are mostly closed around Erie.
1966	 <p>Erie Elementary School was built in 1966; This is a Photo of how it stands today.</p>
1967	Washington mine closes.
1972	Erie has a major flood; a dike around the city was constructed for Coal Creek.
1978	One of the last operating mines in the Erie area, the Eagle Mine discontinues operations.
1979	<p>The Erie Airpark subdivision is annexed into Erie (the first of many subdivisions)</p> <p>Erie's first airmail delivery, May 19, 1938 <i>DeWitt Brennan collection</i></p> 
2000	<p>Erie street paving project is completed; and</p>  <p>A Coal Miner Memorial/Statue was dedicated and positioned in front of Town Hall in memory of the Coal Miners of Erie and the Northern Coal Fields.</p>
2001	<p>Loraine Davis Children's Library opens (serves the children of Erie until 2008; when the Erie Community Library opens)</p> 

Erie Colorado — Selected Timeline

2005

Erie High School Opens



The new Erie High School opened in the fall of 2005 and is located on the northeast corner of Erie Parkway and County Line Road 5

2007



eriehistoricalsociety.org/erie-wise-homestead-museum

The Wise Homestead museum opened to the public in July 2007.

NOTE: *Erie Museum - Wise Homestead*
The Erie Historical Society was founded in 1984 to preserve Erie, Colorado's history. The Wise Homestead dates back to 1869, when Oliver Wise, his wife Adaline (Ada), and their three children came across the plains from Wisconsin to settle in Colorado. Oliver built a small log cabin and began to farm the land. In 1870, he was granted a U.S. Homestead Patent on the property, and began building a permanent farmhouse.

2008

Erie Library Opens

Erie Community Library, a full-service library for all ages, opened on January 12, 2008. The collection consists of nearly 60,000 items and focuses on popular materials in all areas (books, cassettes, CDs, and DVDs). The branch maintains a large selection of popular, high-demand fiction titles known as "Express Books," that are available for checkout immediately. In addition, the branch will be a wireless hotspot, receive daily courier service, and have access to many online databases.



Erie Colorado — Selected Timeline

2008

Erie Community Center

The *Erie Community Center* has something for everyone in the 63,000-square foot facility. **Aquatics** offerings include a lap pool, a leisure pool with play features, a whirlpool, a 2-story figure-8 pool slide with splash tank, the lazy river, and an outdoor water feature and spray area. Guests can also take advantage of a gymnasium, fitness areas on two levels, climbing walls, an indoor running track, racquetball courts, a **child care facility** with adjacent outdoor playground, an indoor playground, and a teen room. Multi-purpose community rooms feature attached proofing kitchen for catered events and parties.



June Issue of the Athletic Business

Black Rock Elementary School

Black Rock Elementary School opened up in the fall of 2008. It is located in the Vista Ridge subdivision on Erie's south side,



2009

Erie's population is approximately 18,000